

Western Grain Transportation Act

this country in seeing an economic revival and in getting back on the right track again.

• (1750)

&ed590;-1 We now have a degree of economy recovery. We need to be able to count on that sustained recovery if we really want to have the jobs and the opportunities that all Canadians should enjoy. But when we put in another element such as that contained in this Bill, we then seriously raise in question the viability of many of those farming operations in the West. I do not think that in the short term we can tell precisely what the consequences of this will be. But there is no doubt that it does raise serious questions and could, in fact, result in some very negative effects on the farm economy.

With regard to the farm economy, we must not just zero in on the grain producer. He is the primary producer and he is producing grain for export and domestic use, but he is also responsible for many of the other economic activities in the country. The multiplier factor is probably seven for each dollar's worth of activity on the farm. There are many things involved. The production of vehicles and all the other things that go into making the farm operation work, all of those things, have impact right across the country and are basic to the economic health of Canada. We must also look at the export markets. As far as Canadian export markets are concerned, we do not have very many bright lights. But one of the bright lights, second to the forest industry, is agriculture. We can expand that.

We have had many discussions about the ways in which we could expand. Canagrex is what we have. It is also under closure. But this is something that needs to be secure in terms of the producers and in terms of the producers and in terms of our ability to deliver that which we contract for with other countries. The markets look bright. We are exporting now over thirty million tonnes per year. We may be able to go as high as exporting forty million tonnes by the years 1990 to 1992. Those things are possible. But we know they depend on the ability to transport that grain and that means some major changes in the attitude of the railway companies. We know that it will take additional capital in order for it to occur.

One of the things I ran across over the last several days when I was wondering what was happening and what was right or wrong about the CPR and the CNR was an item in the *Financial Post* 500. Many things have been said about the history and what was agreed upon at the very beginning when the Crow rate was brought into existence. Of interest was the question of the CPR and the CNR and the way the *Financial Post* 500 listed them. On the negative side was the listing of the big winners and the big losers. Most of the companies in this list are not a surprise to us. But the one that did surprise me was CN. As far as Crown corporations go, CN is the big loser. We have to question who is running CN, how it is managed and who is responsible for it. But that company as a crown corporation has not been doing well. It might be suggested that it might be as a result of the Crow rate, and so on. But on the other hand, if we look at the CPR, listed as one of the biggest of the winners and one of the largest Canadian corporations in terms of economic activity, maybe there is a lot

to be said in terms of how that company is being managed and that changes should occur in the management of CN. Regardless of whether it is CN or CPR there is no question in anyone's mind that both of these companies have an opportunity and a need for major significant capital investment in order to provide the type of transportation facilities that are required by the western grain producers and that is being brought into question.

The final point in terms of substance that is important to me is the statutory agreement that had been put in place initially which is being threatened by the proposal before us in the House now in the form of Bill C-155. It seems to me there is a commitment made to the West and the grain producers. This is a fundamental factor in the whole existence of the western agricultural economy. Whether we are from Ontario, eastern Canada or British Columbia, it is one that we cannot take too lightly. I think it is probably impossible for us not having grown up with this issue, to have a full sense of it, but on the other hand, I think it is a commitment that the Government has a responsibility to honour.

I think I understand the Bill reasonably well. I know the amendments which the Minister is proposing suggest that there will be a safety net and there will be something to help protect. I do not think those things go far enough or can give the sense of security that is needed if we are to have the healthy farm production and economy that we need on behalf of all Canadians.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-155, an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof. As a Member of Parliament from Kootenay East-Revelstoke, I want to say how much I resent this piece of legislation. Our House Leader on May 19 appealed to the Government of Canada to have this Bill split into three portions, first, into a transportation Bill that would deal with problems of transportation with which I and our Party very much want to deal. We want to deal with this in a very constructive way to meet the needs of our transportation in the years to come. Second, we suggested that the Bill deal with grain, the handling of grain and costs in a constructive way, to see what the costs and the consequences would be. We need to look at what would happen with regard to farmers. Third, we want to deal with the Dominion coal blocks, fifty thousand acres of which happen to be situated in my riding of Kootenay East-Revelstoke. I want to speak for a few minutes about that.

It is important to know that over 85 years ago the constituents of Kootenay East-Revelstoke allowed over 50,000 acres of their most prime coal lands to be set aside in the name of the Dominion of Canada. During that period of time they did not have the opportunities to exploit and carry out the kind of developments that took place. Eighty-five years have now gone by and the Canadian Government wants to do away with the Crowsnest rate. That may be something that should be considered, but if you do away with that you should look at the